



**MARICOPA COUNTY**  
**Environmental Services**  
1001 N. Central Ave.  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
[www.maricopa.gov/envsvc](http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc)

May 22, 2001

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## **COUNTY KICKS OFF SUMMER FOOD SAFETY CAMPAIGN**

### ***“Serve It Safe Arizona” Promotes Safe Memorial Day Cookouts***

(Phoenix) — Memorial Day weekend may be ideal for outdoor cooking, but the warm temperatures also provide a breeding ground for bacteria, which can cause foodborne illness—also known as “food poisoning.” That’s why it’s important to take some precautions and practice safe food handling while grilling. The Maricopa County Environmental Services Department is kicking off the 3rd Annual “Serve It Safe Arizona” food safety campaign with some tips for safe backyard barbecuing.

“Cases of foodborne illness peak during the warm summer months,” says David Ludwig, Environmental Health Division Manager. “Many people like to include food in their outdoor activities, but may not realize that they need to be extra careful to keep that food safe.”

Follow these suggestions to fight bacteria and reduce the risk of foodborne illness this summer:

- **Clean Hands-** Always wash your hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling food.
- **Marinating-** Marinate raw meat, fish and poultry in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Don’t re-use the marinade from raw meat, fish or poultry unless you boil it.
- **Pre-Heating-** Pre-heat the coals on your grill for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the coals are lightly coated with ash.
- **Temperature Gauge-** Use a meat thermometer to check for safety and doneness.
- **Cooking Thoroughly** – USDA recommends that hamburgers should be cooked to 160°F, while large cuts of beef such as roasts and steaks may be cooked to 145°F for medium rare or to 160°F for medium. Cook ground poultry to 165°F and poultry parts to 180°F. Fish should be opaque and flake easily.
- **Serving Grilled Food-** Serve hot, grilled foods immediately. When taking foods off the grill, do not put cooked food items back on the same plate that previously held raw food.
- **Leftovers-** Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in the refrigerator or cooler. A full cooler will stay cold longer than one partially filled, so pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs.

As part of the summer campaign, Maricopa County environmental health specialists will provide tips for keeping food safe throughout the summer. Upcoming topics are:

- **June: From the Cart to the Kitchen-** Learn the best way to shop and get food home safely.
- **July: Independence from Leftovers-** What to do with the leftovers from the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.
- **August: Boxed Lunch Breakdown-** Which lunch boxes keep your children’s food the safest?
- **September: National Food Safety Education Month-** Education, contests and more.

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### **About Serve It Safe Arizona**

The Maricopa County Environmental Health Division formed the Serve It Safe Arizona Alliance in 1999 to develop a broad base coalition of public and private partners committed to the education of our citizens about safe food handling practices. Other founding partners are the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Bashas', Fry's, Safeway, Arizona Beef Council, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Arizona Dairy Council, Maricopa County Dept. of Public Health, Albertson's and the Arizona Restaurant Association.

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### **MEDIA ADVISORY:**

**WHO: MARICOPA COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS**  
**WHAT: SAFE BACKYARD GRILLING DEMONSTRATION**  
**WHEN: WEDNESDAY, MAY 23 AT 10:00 A.M.**  
**WHERE: 5311 E. EVANS, PHOENIX (BETWEEN THUNDERBIRD & GREENWAY)**

**For more information, call Laura Devany at (602) 506-6611.**